



# NEWS RELEASE

## HOWARD COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF POLICE OFFICE OF PUBLIC AFFAIRS

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### **Police encourage residents to celebrate July 4<sup>th</sup> safely, lawfully** *Ground-based sparklers illegal in Howard County*

Howard County police are encouraging residents and businesses to keep their celebrations safe and lawful this July 4th holiday.

In Howard County, the sale, possession, and use of ground-based sparklers is prohibited. Violators are subject to a fine of up to \$1,000. Party poppers, ignitable “snakes” and “snap ‘n’ pops”, and handheld sparklers remain legal. Residents should note that handheld sparklers can reach 1,200 degrees Fahrenheit which can cause significant injuries, according to the National Fire Protection agency (NFPA).

According to the Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC), in 2016 there were four deaths and an estimated 11,100 emergency room visits for injuries resulting from fireworks-related incidents throughout the U.S. There were an estimated 900 emergency room-treated injuries associated with sparklers alone. Children younger than 15 accounted for 31 percent of the estimated total 2016 injuries.

Residents who purchase **legal** fireworks should take the following precautions from the CPSC:

- Never allow young children to play with or ignite fireworks.
- Do not experiment with homemade fireworks.
- After a display, children should never pick up spent fireworks, as they may still be active.
- Adults should always supervise fireworks activities.
- Be sure other people are out of range before lighting fireworks.
- Never try to re-light fireworks that have not fully functioned.
- Never point or throw fireworks at another person.
- Never operate fireworks after consuming alcohol.
- Keep a bucket of water or a garden hose nearby in case of fire.
- Douse spent fireworks with water before discarding to prevent a trash fire.

Police are also reminding drivers to avoid alcohol or designate a sober driver before consuming any alcohol this July 4th weekend. Officers will be out in force working to keep the roads safe.

The safest way to enjoy fireworks is to attend a display conducted by trained professionals, such as the county-sponsored event (more info: <https://www.howardcountymd.gov/July4th>). Uniformed and plainclothes officers will be in attendance to ensure crowd safety.

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